

The Believer nothing to do with the Law of the
Ten Commandments; as also several other
Points relative thereto, proved on Scripture-
Ground.

OBSERVATIONS

ON SOME OF

MR. THOMAS'S

REMARKS

ON

MR. BRADFORD'S

REFLECTIONS

UPON THE

BAPTIST CIRCULAR LETTER,

DATED AT Aulcester, IN June, 1786.

By J. TOMKIES.

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

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P R E F A C E.

I Hope I may stand free from the imputation of the censure of an officious intermeddler in this dispute, by taking notice of some things exceptionable, which attracted my observation in Mr. Thomas's little piece. When a person publishes his sentiments to the world, they are of public concern, they immediately cease to be his private property, and commence the property of every man who has liberty to use and examine them, whether they be founded in, and be compatible with the truth of things. In this view of literary property, I presume I may be indulged to notice the performance which gave occasion to the subject of the following sections, and trust it shall meet with that treatment which such property deserves from all who make it an object of their attention. As far as the performance, which I consider is of a personal nature, for me to interfere with, would be impertinent intrusion; this is properly only Mr. Bradford's concern, and must be left by all to his discretion, whether it be worth his notice to attend to it; but what is of general aspect, as bearing hard on the truth itself, is every one's free attention, and to that solely, as my place, I wish to confine my enquiry.

Oswestry, July 6, 1789.

ERRATA,

P R E F A C E

ERRATA.

Page 10, line 16, after nant, read and a rule.

—*P.* 13, *l.* 9, *dele* v *in* ved.—*P.* 17, *l.* 19, *dele* be.—*P.* 55, *l.* 21, *for* brings, *r.* bring.—*P.* 56, *l.* 13, *f.* fill, *r.* fills.—*P.* 57, *l.* 11, *dele* not.—*P.* 67, *l.* 7, *f.* immeditate, *r.* immediate.

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

SECTION I.

*The law a rule of life to a believer, disproved:
which is insisted on by Mr. T. p. 20, 31.*

IT is acknowledged by the gentleman, whose performance is the subject of consideration, that the law is not held and pleaded for by him or his brethren in connection, in the form of a covenant to acquire justification and eternal life thereby, but only as a regulating rule of conduct—that in its former shape it has lost its existence, but still maintains its every feature in all its lineaments in the latter. In answer to this, it is questioned, what foundation is there in the divine oracles (the only guide in all religious enquiries) for this stale and hack-nied distinction between the law as a covenant and a rule? The scriptures furnish us not with the most distant authority for such a distinction. Let any one point out where such a distinction is founded in those infallible writings, and the matter in debate shall instantly be given up in
B obedience

obedience to such unerring decision. When they speak of our deliverance from the law, it is not with this partial distinction, which evidently manifests it to be of human invention. Take the following passages for instances: "We are not under the law."* "The law being dead in which we were held."† "We are become dead to the law."‡ "Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law:|||| which manifestly implies, it says nothing to them that are not under it; and that some are not under it, the apostle in the first quoted proof, hath put it above dispute; and that these are believers the gospel is clear. If such a distinction between the law as a covenant did exist, it could not possibly be more requisite, and a fairer opportunity could not present itself than here, to guard against so momentous a mistake, arising from a want of attending to such an important distinction, when the very point the apostle was endeavouring to establish by the most cogent arguments was our happy deliverance from the law, its total abolition in respect of us, "and we become dead to it by being united to another, even unto Christ."¶ On such an occasion, it was evident, that it was necessary the apostle should distinguish where a difference was to have been made; but there being none,

* Rom. v. 15.—† Rom. vii. 6.—‡ Rom. vii. 4.—|| Rom. iii. 10.—¶ Rom. vii. 1.



he made none. When he speaks of our general discharge and releasement from the law in the following indefinite terms: "we are not under the law, being delivered from the law, being dead to the law, and the law being dead to us," he would have added an expository clause, such as the general current of commentators have done to his words, when they give an explanatory meaning of the above phrases, if such a two-fold distinction in the law was real. When he used the above terms, he would, no doubt, have observed his meaning as such, and as follows: "that we are not under the law as a covenant, but as a rule; that we are delivered from it in its former form, but not in the latter; that as a covenant, it is totally annihilated and disannulled, but as a rule, it retains its full force." This cautionary explanation is put on the apostle's phrases by all commentators in general, which turn the inspired author would certainly have given them, if there had been any foundation in truth for such a difference, and would have rendered the careful caution added by our explanators, needless. From hence it is abundantly manifest, the scriptures countenance no such distinction between the law in a covenanted form, and a regulating rule of conduct; and if such a distinction between it is not founded there, it has no real existence in the truth of things; but is a difference only formed and invented by a pretended regard for

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the interest of holiness and morality, as if there existed no other motive to obedience, or any other rule of conduct, than the law.

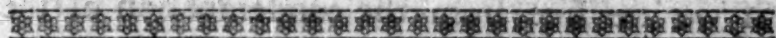
Further, if the law is attended to as a rule, it must be submitted to as a covenant, for it was never given in any other form; and whoever receives it in the one, must abide by it in the other. The consequence is inevitable. The law will admit of no such separation. For whatever purpose any man should adopt the law, the great Lawgiver will treat him, not according to his self-created views of it, but according to its own true intent and purpose. The law is an eternal and immutable rule of right, and whoever wishes to pay obedience to it, must regard it in its strict intent, meaning and requisitions. When it was given as a rule, it was given also at the same time, and in inseparable connection, as a covenant. "What God hath joined together," at and since the foundation of the world, it is daring presumption at any time for any one "to put asunder." The position therefore is groundless cited from the baptist circular letter, that the law, as a rule of conduct, is still binding, as being the law of creation. The law of creation was never delivered in any form than a covenanted one, and to hold it has ceased in that aspect by the introduction of that gracious dispensation of sovereign mercy, which succeeded, and was substituted in its room, and yet that it maintains and possesses all its force, influence and authority,

city, as a rule. is splitting a difference, where the divine law will allow none.

Besides, what is a rule? it is a standard of imitation. And the rule which is pleaded for, as this standard of obedience, is that law, which is holy, just and good. Where it appears, the law is a perfect rule, and if so, it is a conclusive inference, that it must be perfectly obeyed. The copy must be answerable to the original, or else where is the law honoured? To take in a perfect rule as a model of imitation, and pay it but imperfect obedience, is trifling with the sacred code. The obedience must tally in the nicest exactness with the divine pattern. That a rule be perfect, and a conformity thereto be defective, stamps a very depreciating idea of such a rule. Now the question is, is the divine body of precepts a perfect rule, or is it not? Does it exact perfect obedience, or does it not? Surely, the former axiom cannot be denied, and the latter is a truth equally as certain. And from whence we may now further enquire, do any of those who adopt the law as a rule of conduct, observe it in a correspondent conformity according to its governing principle of the internal movements of their hearts, and external deportment of their lives? Here it is too glaring in the carriage of the most fiery zealots for the law, that the same cannot be said in favour of the perfection of their obedience, as of the perfection of the rule itself—rather that there remains an

infinite distance between the rule and the nearest conformity to it. In such a case, what says the law? It will not meet the sinner half way; it will not come a single step of that infinite distance to an accomodation with human nature, it will not bend itself to the weakness and frailty of the creature in lowering its terms, or admitting a palliative construction to be put on its demands, that God will accept the will for the deed, that there is a desire to keep the law, that there is a delight in it after the inward man. All these are inadmissible pleas, while the law is not performed in kind and in the full measure of its requirements. It is naturally to be expected, that when the law is pleaded for as a rule, that a suitable obedience would be paid it. For, I suppose it will not be said, that the law is less strict or extensive in its imaginary form, as a rule, than that of a covenant, did it exist in that separate state. This modification of the divine law, as squaring it with our weakness, is taking such a liberty with it, that will not be allowed; and to admit it as a governing rule of conduct, our deportment must be regulated by it in every punctilio, according to its inward meaning and to its full extent: and in consequence of a failure thereto, we become exposed to its sanction. Therefore it is astonishing that any should be such staunch sticklers for a rule, which not one honours with his obedience. Whence it is evident, how dangerous, as well as absurd, to receive

ceive the law even as a rule; for it is a real truth, whoever will have to do with the law, the law will have to do with them, according to its own form, views and terms.



SECTION II.

If the believer is free from the condemnation of the law, consequently from the obligation of it, proved: Mr. T. only allowing him discharged from it in the former, but not in the latter point of view: p. 29.

OF a kindred error to that which was considered in the former section, is that of the present one, each being founded on false and unscriptural principles. Here is another as undue distinction made, as in the last case, and the one as indefensible on scripture-grounds as the other, both forming a manifest contradiction.

That we are under the obligatory power of the divine law is tacitly and implicatively acknowledged, by pleading for it, as a rule of life: that we are free from its damnatory influence, is readily allowed. The grounds for this distinction are as foundationless, as that which nicely distinguishes between the law as a covenant and a rule, the latter binding, and the former abrogated. In the reason of the scripture-view of things, what authority for such a distinction

distinction here so strenuously pleaded for? Here is separating an idea, which must be inseparably connected. For if we are under the commanding power of the law, we are unavoidably under the condemning power of it: and if we are free from the condemnation of the law, we must be free from the obligation to it. A separation here is extremely injudicious, and throws things into manifest disorder and confusion. In such gross absurdities are they involved—here is a law which commands, but which has no power to condemn. Here is no condemnation to be inflicted for a violation of a law, but which commands with all the authoritative power conceivable. With the condemning power of the law, its commanding power must be indissolubly connected; and where the one influences, the other is forcible. If obligation to the divine code is admitted, condemnation must have place. If the former is adopted, the latter cannot be excluded: and where the damning nature of the law is removed, it loses its commanding influence with it; they must stand or fall together. And when a man regulates his conduct upon a principle, because the law commands him to obedience, he must obey the law in all its preceptive form, make it his standard of duty, and his life must be a perfect transcript of the rule, as that rule is a perfect one; and wherever he fails in a suitable correspondence to the model proposed for the line of manners, he must incur the penalty

nalty annexed and be left abandoned, while living under the law, to remediless condemnation. The plea is unavailing, that believers do not attend to the commanding authority of the law to seek eternal life thereby, but only as a rule of conduct to walk by. This is an human modification of the divine law. If the obligatory power of the law be allowed as requisite to govern our conduct, and is attended to by any one, as the governing authority of his deportment, he must attend to it according to its preceptive influence, and not according to such an intent and purpose, and in such a sense and view as he means it: and since such an one places himself under the commanding power of the law, even in his own view of it, by so doing he admits the law to have some kind of authority over him: and while he allows it in that light, or in any other, and cannot but believe it totally done away, and fully answered in the obedience and person of his glorious surety, Jesus Christ, the law will treat with him according to its own terms, nature and design: and if he be a transgressor of the law, must inevitably fall under the curse. The law knows but one invariable line of things. This chain of reasoning is not of an abstract, metaphysical kind, the flights of fancy, or a sentimental notion of a party, but has the written word of God for its authority and foundation. The scriptures connect the command and curse of the law, as an inseparable couplet. " As many as are
 " of

" of the works of the law, say they, are under the curse. Curfed are they that continue
 " not in all things, which are written in the book
 " of the law to do them."* I am not unconscious what kind of reply will be made to this:—that the curse belongs to all who seek for justification and life by the works of the law, and who fail in discharging the stipulated, conditional terms: that in this sense the law is not held or supported; and that the apostle is only speaking of the absolute impracticability of obtaining acceptance with the Deity by the works of the law, that as many as adopt that absurd plan, are under the curse from the want of an answerable and uninterrupted performance of all things written in the law: that the apostle has no exclusive idea in all his reasoning of the law, as a rule of life or conduct. To this may I be permitted to reply in my turn, that when the apostle excludes the law in the capital point of justification, what authority can be produced, that he means to reserve it, as a rule for believers to govern their deportment by? if the apostle's language and arguments be attended to according to his obvious meaning, and weighed and considered, divested of any preconceived prejudice, it is very evident that every one who pretends to regulate his life and conduct by the law upon its authoritative command, must fall under its con-

* Gal. iii. 10.

denying power by reason of only a partial and defective obedience to it. The phrase made use of by the apostle, "as many as are of the works of the law," clearly means, as many as do the works of the law in obedience to its governing authority, are truly and absolutely under the curse: and the reason assigned is, because a continued, unremitted, universal obedience is not paid to its preceptive sanction. If obedience is paid to the law, because the law commands it, it must be even as the law commands it: or else here is a manifest rebellion to the divine law, and denying in the strongest terms the commanding power of it, to which such pretended regard is apparently made: and authority more than human hath assured us, to whose authority, every human notion must be sacrificed and fall to the ground, as Dagon before the ark, "that they are cursed, who continue not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"*

Another argument of weight in this important matter, is the consideration of what our divine and incarnate surety hath done and suffered for sinners that believe in his name. It may be asked how was the curse of the law removed? by the Lord Jesus Christ, suffering the penalty to a broken law. And if it be allowed, that he discharged the preceptive equally as the penal part of the law by his active,

* Gal. iii. 10.

as the latter by his passive righteousness, the question on that principle has no small degree of force in it, why must the commanding power of the law controul the conscience and conduct of a believer, when our glorious and gracious Redeemer hath released him from it, by answering it fully in every tittle, in his spotless life, as he hath cleared him from the condemning influence of it by his meritorious death? Can any ostensible reason be given, why one should be removed, while the other should remain in full force, as peremptory in its commands, as extensive in its precepts, when the divine surety hath attended to the law in both points of view alike, and magnified and made it honourable by his active and passive obedience? It ought to be considered, and is so by every one who see the truth, that the law in every form of it is abolished; that if its penalty is taken away, so likewise must its binding authority be destroyed with it when our almighty and complete substitute duly answered them both. It casts contempt and argues imperfection and insufficiency in the work of our exalted head, not to receive these two important points in equal force and extent. From the preceding view of things, which is the medium in which divine truth presents them, it appears that all who hold the commanding influence of the law upon their life and conscience, are evidently under the curse; and that if we are free from condemnation by it, we must be set free from obligation to it.

SECTION III.

The definition of the moral law considered as improper and unscriptural, as given by Mr. T. p. 18. 31.

“THE moral law,” as defined by the brethren in connection with the gentleman, whose performance is the subject of enquiry, “consists of all the preceptive part of the decalogue or ten commandments, with every thing else of the same nature, that is discoverable by reason, or revealed in scripture.” To this Mr. T. adds in his own words, “this includes every divine command in the bible, or any thing of the same nature, that may justly be deduced from it.”* Where a distinction ought to be observed, none is made; and where no distinction was requisite, one is unnecessarily invented.

The foregoing definition of the law is so exceedingly loose and confused, that it jumbles and confounds every command and exhortation of the new testament to be of the same nature, as directed to the same end, as resulting from the same principles, and guarded by the same sanction as the law, when it is very evident there is a vast variety of exhortations in the divine writings, of an evangelical nature, clothed in a preceptive form of dress,

* Page 18.

which are totally unknown to the law of the ten commandments, such as “repent and believe the gospel.”* “Come unto me,”† &c. Which preceptive forms of expression wear more the pleasing appearance of gracious invitations, and unconfined privilege of doing the things exhorted to, than the authoritative command to do duties out of our power to perform, which is the peremptory nature of the original system and constitution of things, which is the law. It is also allowed, that many duties and performances in the new testament, binding upon the conduct of the children thereof, are the same, as to the outward and external act of them, as those of the law itself. But the whole of those duties, as urged in the new testament, are practicable in themselves, by all upon whom they are binding, are suited to our weakness and infirmities, are not measured by the degree of affection they are performed, but by the principle of the truth of God, believed in the gospel, and are only designed as regulating rules of our conduct and deportment of life. Neither do they extend their influence to the exclusion or extinction of every unruly thought, irregular desire, or every rising corruption, over which we have no such controuling power, or pass an act of condemnation upon us, where we fail, at any time, through our present weakness, in the discharge of any

* Mark i. 10. —† Math. xi. 28.

of our incumbent duties. But such is the spirituality of the divine law that condemns every thing of that sort as criminal; whether allowed or unallowed, admits of no softening terms or mitigating construction. Neither is it from a principle of any persuasion that the law has any authority over the new testament-children, that any one of them performs any duties or obedience, that tend to the regulation of his life and manners. It is not because the law commands them, he does them; he loves God, but it is not because the law enjoins him; indeed, the believer perceives that he cannot, and knows that he is not called as a believer in Jesus Christ, to love God in that character the law exhibits him, which is an absolute Deity, requiring our love to him in the supremest degree, in the purest affection, as the basis, the very foundation of his love to us. The gospel inverts this order: It lays the sovereign love of God in the promises, blood, and righteousness of Jesus, as the foundation of a sinner's hope, believing in them, and from whence the believer's love, as the effect of that, results and arises according to the apostle's axiom, "we love him, because he first loved us."* These arguments fully and plainly evince, that the definition of the moral law, including every thing of a preceptive nature, be it in the law or in the gospel, is exceedingly vague and in-

* John iv. 19.

accurate, according to the revelation of the divine will. It is an huddled confusion of both law and gospel, to the obvious distinction of neither, when each should strictly keep its respective place. It may be argued with as great propriety, that the laws of every nation or kingdom upon earth are included in the laws of England, as the law of Moses is included in the law of Christ.

But since these gentlemen's definition of the moral law is so loose and indeterminate, it may be desired to be known what is the moral law? and here we will confine it, as it ought, to its own peculiar system: that it is that divine code, or body of precepts contained in the decalogue, or ten commandments, guarded by the sanction of life or death to the performer or transgressor thereof. To deviate from this definition of it, is leading our views and ideas from it to a something else, which is to be involved in it, which is totally separate from it, and independant of it, as also unconnected with it.



SECTION IV.

The passages of the new testament, which are referred to by Mr. T. as retaining the law in the sense pleaded for, as a rule, viewed as to their true meaning and intent.

THE next object which presents itself worthy observation in Mr. T.'s performance, is the consideration of those passages which he adverts

verts to in the new testament, in defence of the law, as still in force as a rule of conduct. Let the first of these passages, which we would consider, be that spoken by our Lord,* and which Mr. T. insinuates is established there by our Saviour, as a directory rule of conduct.† And here may we view what gave occasion to our Lord's observations in the passage under consideration, when it will appear clear in what sense they are understood. A subtle, profound expositor of the law, with a very ensnaring view, addresses our Lord thus: "Master, " which is the great commandment in the " law? And Jesus said unto him, ' thou " shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy " heart, and with all thy soul, and with all " thy mind.' This is the first and great com- " mandment; and the second is like unto it, " thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." To which our Lord adds, " on these two com- " mandments hang all the law and the pro- " phets." Where does it here appear, in the simple connection of the passage, that our Lord intimated the most distant implication that he intended those duties, as commanded by the law, as indispensably incumbent on his followers? He answered the inquisitive lawyer's enquiry according to the purport of it; observing, that every command of the decalogue was included or deducible from those two leading

* Math. xxii. 36, 40.—† Page 19.

ones, of love to God, and love to man. That where these two grand commands were observed with the strictest regulation in heart, and the most practical attention in life, there could be no possibility of the smallest variation from the law, in one single precept, and would be a necessary performance of every command; but while these duties are opposed, as, and because commanded by the law; yet, as they are enjoined in the new testament, they are binding and attended to by every child thereof. And, though the act enjoined in both dispensations be the same, yet the principle from, and the end to which they are commanded and performed in both systems be different, as if the duties themselves were different. For, as they are founded in the legal constitution of things, they must be performed with the purest affection, with the most unreserved sincerity, and with the utmost exertion of every mental and corporeal power, from a principle of securing and enjoying the divine favour.— Whereas the new testament enjoins the respective duties of love to God and man, from the knowledge of the love of God, as a reconciled God in Christ; a character in which the law presents no such exhibition of him; and esteems those duties as rightly discharged from that knowledge of him, and not as we find our feelings elevated or affected in the performance of them; or whether we do them with a suitable degree of affection, and free from any

any of our corrupt thoughts and imaginations, unallowably arising in our mind in the discharge of them.

Perfectly analogous is the sentiment of the apostle Paul to our divine Lord's and Saviour's, in the other passage selected by Mr. T. for ascertaining his view of retaining the law, as a rule.* The apostle says, "love is the fulfilling of the law."† And here it is very evident, that the apostle, from the context where he draws the conclusion, "that love is the fulfilling of the law," has not the least intention of retaining the law in force, upon the conduct of a believer. He wishes to inculcate a mutual and reciprocal regard and love among the followers of our Lord; and that love was the grand characteristic, the distinguished badge of the professors of the truth, even as it was of such vast extent in the dispensation of the law, as to include and envelope in itself the fulfilment of the whole law. The apostle here meaning, that as love was of such momentous weight in the legal scale of things, that it was of no smaller concern in its proper place, in the new dispensation of the spirit: that as it comprehended every duty of the law, it also comprehended every precept of the new testament, of a practical kind; for where love is the governing principle of the heart, it would not fail to manifest its cheering influence. Hence

* Page 19.—† Rom. xiii, 10.

the apostle has not the least idea in this passage of being understood, that he designs the law as binding on the conduct of the believer, or that the believer, from a gospel-view of things, fulfils the law according to the command and to the extent of it. Mr. T. is not aware of the inconsistency in which he involves himself, by giving such a view to the apostle's reasoning as he wishes to convey. In his remarks, p. 28, he reprobates the idea that any man is capable of fulfilling the law; yet the apostle peremptorily affirms, that "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law."* Now if the apostle Paul meant this text in the light Mr. T. designs to maintain and hold it, how can he, on the other hand, lug the apostle in to defend and patronise a sentiment which he himself disavows? In the aforesaid construction, Paul, and his brother James, introduces the law on other occasions: the former in Gal. v. 14, and the latter in his epistle, ii. 8.

In as mistaken a sense Mr. T. understands the apostle,† when he quotes the old testament promise, "that God would put his laws in the mind of his children, and write them in their hearts.‡ As a proper preliminary for settling the mind of God in this passage, it will be right previously to observe, that nothing is more common than that many are led more by the sound of words than the sense of them, and

* Rom. xiii. 8, —† Page 20. —‡ Heb. viii. 10. which

which inevitably must be the source of numberless fatal errors. Mr. T. in his little piece, has unhappily more than once fell into this predicament: in what instances, we shall observe as they meet us in the course of our enquiries of it; one is in the text, which presents itself to be considered. Mr. T. meeting with the word "laws," a term used to express the decalogue, or ten commandments, interprets it as signifying them. The phrase law, is, in the divine writings, no way a term peculiarly confined and limited to the legal system of Moses; the apostle uses it as applicable to both dispensations, when he observes, "the law of the spirit of life hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* He in another place speaks of the law of faith in opposition to the law of works.† These are sufficient testimonies, that the term, law, signifies a dispensation, a system or constitution of things, and is applied by the inspired writers, to that gracious one of the gospel; and that it is in allusion to this, the apostle understands the subject of the divine promise, in this passage conveyed by the expression, "laws," is manifest beyond a doubt; for it is very conceivable the apostle is treating of the new covenant, by which Jehovah would discover his mind to his people, and write it in indelible characters in their understanding. † Hence is also clear, that

* Rom. viii. 2.—Rom. iii. 27.

the law of the spirit is contrary to the law of the ten commandments, and not as Mr. T. insinuates, that "there is no contrariety between them," when he says, "Mr. Bradford seems to be displeased with the written law of the ten commandments, as unworthy of a believer's notice, and as if it were contrary to the law of the spirit."

Mr. T. further apprehends,* the believer to be under the law, from another passage of the new testament, when he proposes the question, "was not he a believer who said, 'being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ?'"† Here Mr. T.'s mistake arises from a misapprehension of the apostle's mind, a want of attention to the phrase in the original, translated "under the law," and being led away by the sound rather than the sense of the form of the expression. The apostle's meaning here, as elsewhere, must be gathered from the scope and context of the passage, a slight view of which discovers to us, that he is here vindicating the christian freedom, which the gospel privileged and supported him to use; yet, notwithstanding the enjoyment of this enlargement, he submitted to many peculiar restraints, of a circumstantial nature, to obtain access and introduction among the various classes of Jew and Gentile, that some of each party may, if possible, be

* Page 28.—† Corinth. ix. 21.

made happy converts to the truth of God. When Paul speaks of his accomodating mode of conformity among the Gentiles, he distinguishes them under a well-known epithet, as being without law, in contradistinction from the Jews, who were characterised, as being under the law; and lest any one should form an unfriendly representation of the case of his time-serving accomodation, he explains himself in a parenthesis, by observing, that while he totally shook of those long, habitual, jewish restraints, which had precluded all kind of connection between Jew and Gentile, he did not go unto undue lengths; that while he announced his freedom, he did not consider himself as unhackled from every kind of restraint in his new state of enlargement; but adds, " while " I became as one without law, I still considered myself as being not without a law " to God, but *within a law* to Christ," which is the literal translation of the Greek, and which our translators have rather injudiciously translated "*under the law.*" In such a view of the apostle's mind, which is a just one, where is there the least intimation that he considered himself as under the law of the ten commandments? He, as every believer knows, was under some peculiar injunctions, agreeable to his new state in Christ, and which he did not fail duly to observe, while he indulged himself that liberty of conduct towards the Gentiles for the end he assigns.

As

As unhappy is Mr. T. in another portion of the writings of the apostle Paul, which he quotes in the form of an interrogation, in the immediate succeeding sentence to that which we last discussed.* Here he brings the apostle as asserting, not that he was only under the law, but going the utmost stretch man was to go, that he actually served it, that he was a personal observer of it. Mr. T.'s words are, "did not the apostle delight in the law, and *serve it?*"† Mr. T. prints the verb "serve," and the pronoun "it," in italics, wishing, as we may suppose, peculiar stress to be made, and particular notice to be taken of the apostle's expressions, which we shall readily do, and view them, we trust, to do the apostle more justice and discover the truth more clearly than Mr. T. has done. It is granted without dispute the apostle confesses "he did serve the law of God." But where and how? in and with his mind. And is this such a service as contents the law? will the law be satisfied with a bare naked service of the mind? no, far otherwise. It demands its requirements in kind, in action and in life, and less than that will not be accepted. Let a man serve the law with all the force, activity and exertion of the mind, and such a service will avail him nothing. The law admits no composition of the will for the deed. "In the mind" was the utmost stretch of obe-

* Page 28.—† Rom. vii. 25.

dience to the divine law so renowned a character as the apostle could arrive at, and which he was convinced was fruitless and unavailing, "as he knew not how to perform that which was good;" that all proper and suitable obedience to the law consisted, not in sincere wishes, heart-felt delights to serve it, but in a punctual performance of its duties. Whence it is clearly to be seen, that the apostle's service to the law, was only an unoperative existence in the mind.

We cannot close this section without taking notice of some other portions of holy writ made use of by Mr. T. which though they be not introduced by him in the body of his work, yet are intended, no doubt, to serve his end by being hung out as mottos in the title-page of it. To which he hath annexed their authorities, as so many vouchers, which cannot be disputed; and though we do not presume to call them in question, yet we must beg leave to dispute the view he intends by them, as being inconsistent with the original design of them. Though Mr. T. passes no comment on them, yet the subject of his performance serves as an explanatory construction of them, which they were intended to usher in, and which is to establish the law, as binding upon believers by way of a rule of conduct.

That which stands foremost in this class, is the ninth commandment, which is, "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," and which has the moral law annexed

ed to it for its authority. The precept itself as far as it is practicable in the extent of it, no believer in Jesus Christ, we may venture to assert, ever called in question; yet it remains a truth equally as certain, no believer ever practices it on the authority of the law, as knowing in the light and extent of it by the law his substitute, Jesus Christ, has fulfilled it for him, that he stands released from all obedience to it by the mandatory power of the divine law.

For who has not in the sense of the law broken this precept; every man unexcepted abides convicted, as a transgressor of it? For such is the spiritual extent of this as of every other precept of the righteous law of heaven, that it brings a man into condemnation as a transgressor, for every transgression only in thought, when the crime existed only in embryo, in the imagination, and never once found a birth either in word or in action: making no sort of allowance for the transgression even after that manner, whether it was an allowed or unallowed thought in the mind, whether it was harboured and indulged with pleasure and delight, or only some sudden imagination started in the mind against the approved acceptation of the man. But without going to the utmost extremity of guilt by the law, who is the person, even in regard of the precept under consideration, who has not failed by some secret, ill-natured reflection, or some private or open slander on the principles or conduct of his neighbour?

neighbour? A more avowed instance of the breach of this precept cannot be more glaring, than in the conduct of the world towards the faithful advocates of the truth, who professedly have no objection to the name the religious and profane part of it wish to fasten on them, which is that of Antinomians, a term which signifies against the law, for such we avowedly declare ourselves to be; but be it known, while so much be granted, that we do not object to the name of Antinomians, though it be held in such contemptuous disdain by every professing religious party; yet, we must beg to object to it in the slanderous view our enemies so freely bestow it on us, as signifying persons holding principles of a libertine tendency, that pay no sort of regard to our conduct and respective duties in life. "Is not this bearing false witness" with a witness? It is a pity such advocates for the law were not better keepers of it, and not pleading for it, barely in theory, while their practice contradicts it. For even here, while we oppose this precept as binding us by the mandate of the law, we admit the practice of it by the authority of another, who hath introduced it into his system to a different end, and from a different principle than the law enjoins it, and only to such an extent and degree as is practicable by human creatures.

Another testimony Mr. T. appeals to in his title-page, is the authority of our Lord from a declaration made by him in what is vulgarly

called our Saviour's discourse on the mount. And I must freely own, I can but wonder at Mr. T.'s disingenuous manner of quoting him, since he appears so much hurt at his opponent's abuse of scripture by misrepresentation, that he should only give us a mutilated, partial clause, stopping our Lord in the middle of his sentence, which evidently leaves a latitude to draw a conclusion very different to what may be done from the perfect, unfangled declaration itself, as made by our Lord: "Think not I am come to destroy the law,"* is all Mr. T. quotes, and there abruptly leaves the passage. Now nothing is clearer than what is Mr. T.'s view in exhibiting the text in such a mangled form. Considering the point he endeavours to establish, the partial quotation by him of our Lord's declaration, leaves any to conclude that as he did not come to destroy the law, it was still, as for him, in full force upon every child of man. But happy we can have recourse from whence the authority is taken, and as happy we are to find it there in a fuller form than which Mr. T. has presented it to our view, which, he well knew, had he quoted the text in its perfect state, would have made more against him than for him, which, as he has given it us, bears something in his favour. But to rescue our Saviour's declaration from any unfair construction that may be placed on it, from

* Math. v. 17.

the defective quotation of it by Mr. T. we will exhibit it at full length, with what manifestly appears to be our Lord's mind. The text runs thus: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."* Where he would have us think, that though he did not come to destroy the law, that he left his followers to fulfil it, by their own personal obedience, but that he purposely came to fulfil it personally, and not to destroy or annihilate the force and authority of its precepts, by a total neglect of their performance. And since our Lord's design in fulfilling the law was never frustrated, but punctually accomplished; that, as he came to fulfil it, he actually did fulfil it; the consequence is conclusive, and the reasoning just and admissible, that since he fulfilled the law, the law is no longer in force on the believer, being answered for him by his surety. That it is the moral law our Lord here means, Mr. T. does not dispute, from his manner of adverting to it; and that it is so in fact the context abundantly evinces.

The last testimony of that treble evidence, which Mr. T. has produced, and which he imagines is incontrovertible, a threefold cord that cannot be broken; that by the mouth of three such respectable authorities, as the moral law, Jesus Christ, and the apostle Paul, every word

* Math. v. 17,

must be established, advanced by Mr. T. and that to question his arguments is to dispute the matter ultimately with them, as what he hath set forth is only deducible from them ; we do not call in doubt the premises on which he grounds his sentiments, as they are originally in themselves, but the mutilated form in which he cites them and dresses them up to suit his own views. And here Mr. T. is equally unfair in quoting this passage of the apostle,* as he was in that of his divine master ; for he has only given us the middle part of a sentence, and that not without the omission of a very material clause in the body of it, well knowing, had he included the preceding verse, which serves as an introduction to that he has adopted for one of his mottos, it would have made point-blank against him, and held him forth in too glaring a light in the character he labours to sustain, which is that of a teacher of the law, and sentence of condemnation would be passed against him as such by the very voice of that person on whose authority he attempts to rest the issue of his cause. But let us hear and attend to what the apostle says in the passage before us ;† observing also what appears to be his obvious, unstrained meaning there. Paul begins this epistle in cautioning Timothy to

* The partial quotation of the apostle by Mr. T. is thus : “ The law is made—for “ the lawless.”—† 1 Tim. i. 5, 11.

guard sound doctrine, from which, he acquaints him, some teachers had swerved: in what respect they had erred, he informs him; that it was, they were desirous to be "teachers of the law, "not knowing," observes he, "what they said, "or whereof they affirmed." But says the apostle, while they manifest such gross ignorance of the true intent and office of the law, "we know that the law is good, if a man use "it lawfully:" that is, as is evident the apostle's meaning, the law is good, if a man apply it properly, or lawfully in justifying the righteous, and condemning the wicked: For, adds he, "the law was not made," or as the Greek literally expressed, means, does not lie against "a righteous man" to condemn him, but "against the lawless," and similar characters which he particularly describes.

We have examined, I believe, every scripture-voucher which Mr. T. had summoned, both in the title-page and body of his pamphlet in behalf of the law, in the sense he pleads for it, and find, that neither of them, fairly considered, admits it in the view he wishes to impose it on the divine authors, and on us by their authority.

SECTION

SECTION V.

*The Queries in p. 16, considered as totally un-
evangelical, and diametrically opposite to the
gospel-view.*

HOW far Mr. Bradford has misunderstood and so misrepresented the queries as cited by him from the baptist circular letter, is no way incumbent upon me to determine; but as they are proposed by Mr. T. with his explanation, we can be at no loss how they are to be understood, and are by all means worthy of notice, as being exceedingly inconsistent with the truth.

The first query stands thus: "Do we by the righteousness of Christ personally honor God?" That is, says Mr. T. "can a believer honor God by the righteousness of Christ, when he pays no regard to the moral law as a rule of conduct?"

Here we observe the query runs in that form that admits of a negative; and the negative part of it, which is not expressed, but to be understood, Mr. T. has supplied in his reflection on it, which he has sent out in a similar dress, in the negative form of a question; when he enquires, "can a believer honor God by the righteousness of Christ, when he pays no regard to the moral law as a rule of conduct." In Mr. T.'s view of things, Mr. T. certainly means he cannot; and under-
stands

stands that every believer must pay a regard to the moral law as a rule of conduct, to honor God by the righteousness of Christ. This is no forced or strained construction of Mr. T.'s thoughts, but the obvious first-sight meaning of them. But while this appears to be so clearly Mr. T.'s view, it is also as clearly to be seen by all who have clear and unmuddled views of the gospel, that it is not the view of that gracious dispensation. And it is also maintainable, that every believer personally honors God by the righteousness of Christ without any regard to the law. View the case as it stands on our opponent's side of the question and it will evidently turn out against him. As the Deity is honored by a suitable regard to the moral law, as far as our obedience falls short of its requisitions, so far we dishonor God. And now who is the person on a comparative view of his conduct with that standard of right, the law, that can maintain with any grace, that his conscience testifies to him, that he has honored God by a suitable, proper obedience thereto? Will not that divine monitor within accuse him to the contrary, and how much he has dishonored Jehovah by the numerous, aggravated moral defects of his conduct to the holy and righteous law of heaven? If a believer cannot personally honor God by the righteousness of Christ, without a personal obedience to the law, it evidently implies, that God is not honoured solely by his believing
the.

the righteousness of Christ without the joint concurrence of his own personal observation of the law, which argues contempt on the spotless obedience of the Son of God, as being an insufficient ground of displaying and promoting the divine honor. But we maintain, that every believer personally honors God by his faith in the righteousness of Christ, without any advertency to the moral law to that end, by trusting to it alone, as the righteousness which is the only ground of hope with his Maker.

The second query is not less unsound : it is thus formed : “ do we by that righteousness (meaning of the Lord Jesus) experience the “ exalted pleasures, which are only to be “ found in the practice of holiness ? ” that is, in Mr. T.’s comment, “ can a person without holiness experience joy and peace in believing ? ” Mr. T. has endeavoured to qualify the query in question by his commenting view of it, but has not mended the matter, so as to give a scriptural idea of it. May we view it first in its native form, and afterwards in Mr. T.’s expository construction of it. “ Do we,” runs the query, “ by that righteousness of Christ “ experience the exalted pleasures, which are “ only to be found in the practice of holiness ? ” what can this mean, but that the spotless obedience of our incarnate God cannot afford those exalted pleasures of the conscience, and that the practice of holiness is the only source from whence

whence they spring? for the query intimates they are only to be found there. Is not this establishing our personal obedience, as the foundation of all true experience to the utter exclusion of the Redeemer's righteousness for that noble purpose, and in flat contradiction to the word of truth, which assures us "that being justified by faith we have peace with God;"* "That blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin?"† And what is Mr. T.'s improvement of the query? it is only this. The query itself totally excludes the righteousness of our Lord, as the spring of all experimental pleasure in the mind and conscience, and places it in the hands of the practice of holiness. Mr. T. insinuates in his interrogative explanation of the query, when he proposes, "can a person without holiness experience joy and peace in believing," that our own holiness is a necessary requisite to the enjoyment of joy and peace: that the divine righteousness of Christ is insufficient of itself to contribute those internal blessings, and needs the absolute concurrence of our own righteousness; that it is highly dangerous to derive peace and joy in believing without an intervening view of our own holiness: whereas the apostle gives us to understand, "that there is all joy and peace in believing," without the most distant hint of the necessity of our own holi-

* Rom. v. 1.—† Rom. v. 8.

ness united, by way of supplement, to give peace and joy to the conscience of a sinner believing in the finished salvation of the son of God.

The third query proposes the following sentiment: "doth the righteousness of the Redeemer capacitate us for communion with God?" If that cannot, what can? We ask in turn, will our own righteousness answer that end. The very form of the query supposes our own obedience will capacitate us for divine communion, and that our Lord's will not. And if our own personal righteousness can accomplish our enjoyment of fellowship with God, the Redeemer's was very needlessly performed. Neither does the turn Mr. T. attempts to put upon the query, unnatural and forced as it is, serve in the least to give a scriptural complexion to it, when he says, "is the man who despises the moral law as a rule of conduct, capacitated by the righteousness of Christ for communion with God?" By which is plainly understood, that none but they who keep the law are capacitated by the righteousness of Christ for communion with God. And on this principle all are ever incapacitated for the divine privilege of communion with God, as despisers of the moral law by being ever transgressors of it. For every transgressor of the law is a despiser of it. The distinction which may here be pleaded between a wilful violation and an unintended disobedience

ence through the weakness of corrupt nature, will not serve turn; for the moral law knows no such distinction. Or if Mr. T. only means that no man is capacitated for divine communion, but he who studies to the best of his power to pay a due regard to the moral law, this also is a false view of things. For if a man is not capacitated for communion with the Deity by the righteousness of his Redeemer, independant in every respect of his own, then his own is some way or other necessary in the matter. And I will venture to say, that any common reader, on a view of the query, would never entertain the least thought of such a respect to the moral law being included in it, as Mr. T. wishes us to suppose by his commentary there is; but that such a reader would in an instant conceive, that the righteousness of the Redeemer is excluded in the most absolute terms, as unable to capacitate us for communion with God, and that something else was the grand requisite to that important end.

The fourth query adopts the following language: "is it by that, by the righteousness of Christ, we enjoy the testimony of a good conscience, and a delightful sense of the approbation of Jehovah?" Certainly it is; though the query implies it is not. What else can constitute a good conscience of an evil one than the righteousness of the Redeemer; or by what can we enjoy the knowledge of Jehovah's approbation than by it? and the com-

menting light which Mr. T. wishes to throw on the query, is such that no reader could possibly conceive was implied in it. Every query absolutely denies the thing it proposes, and Mr. T. in his explanation only patches its meaning with some strained interpretation, which was evident to no one but himself, or the secret views of the gentlemen in connection with him. Who could ever have thought that the query implied such an idea, which Mr. T. has put on it, and how much more agreeable to truth is it by the new dress, which he hath cloathed it in? when he says; "can a person who dis-
 " regards every command in the bible have the
 " testimony of a good conscience, and a de-
 " lightful sense of his pleasing God through the
 " righteousness of Christ?" Nothing is more obvious than what is intended in Mr. T.'s exposition of the query, than that a person must regard every command in the bible to enjoy the testimony of a good conscience, and the approbation of Jehovah through the righteousness of Christ, which as obviously signifies, that the righteousness of Christ, simply believed, and unconnected with any other requisite, is insufficient to enjoy the privileges of a good conscience, and the approbation of the divine esteem; and that it is of dangerous tendency to derive them from that source alone, without a concurring view of some other object; a sentiment greatly derogatory to the finished righteousness of our glorious surety, which makes of

an evil conscience a good one, simply by believing, and which assures the sinner of the divine approbation. But while we are combating the above erroneous view of things, may it be understood, that every believer regards every command of God to the end and intent for which the command is given; but to possess the testimony of a good conscience and God's approbation, he regards no other command than that which conveys the medium of those blessings, which is the work of the cross alone. Mr. T. further adds at the conclusion of his exposition of this last query, "that the sense of
 "the whole paragraph seems to be no more
 "than this, that the righteousness of Christ,
 "imputed to believers for justification, was
 "never intended to exempt them from fearing
 "God, and keeping the commandment of a
 "blessed Redeemer, out of love to him." Here Mr. T. manifests a very muddy idea of the gospel-plan. And we would ask, does not every believer who has fled for refuge, as a sinner, to the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus, discover herein a fear of God, and keep the commandment of his Lord? Here is manifested the only true fear of God. It is well known, there may be great and awful fears of God, and of the divine majesty in persons who have not made that righteousness their sanctuary and hope, as guilty sinners; and by not giving credit to the divine report concerning it, as it is revealed to sinners to be believed in

for their dependence with God, they discover no real fear of God, because they object to his testimony concerning his Son; and whoever believing this testimony on the authority of God in his word, has the only true fear of God before his eyes, and keeps the commandment of a blessed Redeemer, which is to believe in his name for everlasting life, to suffer for his sake on earth, and to love them which are of the truth, for the truth's sake dwelling in them. And while we advance these reflections, we are warranted to say, that the righteousness of Christ does exempt us from fearing God, in the view of the law, and from keeping the commandments enforced by that authority, which is to be apprehended is the sense Mr. T. holds these expressions, though he styles them the commandment of a blessed Redeemer, and pleads his love, as the motive of obedience to them. I think the queries are considered in their true meaning and sense intended to be conveyed by them, and evidently made to appear inconsistent with divine truth.

SECTION

SECTION VI.

The position as allowed in p. 17, and more particularly explained in p. 23, "that obligation to obey the moral law supposes a capacity to be governed by a law," examined, and the fallacy of the argument contained in it, detected and confuted.

THE position, which is the subject considered in the present section, is the following, which is cited from the circular letter, which first gave rise to the present dispute: "We allow," say the Aulcester-ministers in their letter, and which Mr. T. further supports in his remarks, "that obligation to obey the moral law, supposes a capacity of being governed by a law. This capacity man has, being a rational creature, and a free agent." there is a very apparent fallacy in this argument, which of course renders all reasoning from it, as it stands, fallacious also. In it is evidently implied this inference, that man has a capacity of being governed by the moral law, than which there cannot be a more preposterous absurdity. Mr. T. admits this inference just, when he affirms, "law and gospel, the whole scripture, and all tolerable human laws in the world, shew that man is capable of being governed by a law. Our letter says," observes he, "by a law, indefinitely; that is, by any law, then by the moral law;

" law, which is the best, being perfect."* It is laid down here as a certain data, or a maxim to be granted as a given principle, " that our obligation to the moral law, supposes a capacity to be governed by a law;" but there is a manifest fallacy in the argument. For, to have kept the argument connected, it should have been worded, " that our obligation to the moral law, supposes a capacity to be governed by the moral law," or else where consists the force of the argument? To say our obligation to the moral law, supposes a capacity to be governed by a law, is saying nothing to the purpose, except it be also understood, that we have a capacity of being governed by the moral law. And yet, to connect our obligation to the moral law, from a presumption of a capacity to be governed by a law, is flying from the point. It is true, man has a capacity of being governed by a law; but this does not necessarily suppose him to possess a capacity to be governed by the moral law. To be governed by a law, is one thing; and to be governed by the moral law, is another. For the one, man has a capacity; for the other, he has not. It is possible a man may be governed by the law of his country, because that law may be framed suited to his present weakness and imbecility. It is possible for believers to be governed by the rules of the new testament for

their present conduct, being made capable of their performance. But though these are possible cases, whereby we may be governed, and for which we have a suitable capacity, according to each respective case, yet this will not allow to conclude we can be governed by the moral law, or that we have a capacity to be governed by it. The moral law is too spiritual and extensive a standard of obedience for our present capacity. When that law was first enjoined, a suitable capacity to be governed by it was also given us. There was a perfect conformity between the rule set to perform, and the powers given to perform it. What was laid on us was no intolerable burden. Nothing was exacted beyond our power: not like the unreasonable requisitions of Pharaoh, which demanded the usual quantity of tile from the Israelites, when they were to furnish themselves with combustible ingredients to burn them, as when those articles were ready provided to their hands.

Here it may be said, has the divine law of Mount Sinai lost its power of commanding, because man has lost his power of being governed by it? No, not on that account is it that the authority of the law has ceased. Neither was it new modelled because man had lost his power of performing it, adapting itself to human weakness. The law remained in full force, unchangeable as its divine author, notwithstanding the lamentable change in man, rendering

rendering him incapacitated to be governed by it. What then has laid aside the moral law? not the creature's incapacity of obeying it; not because man has lost his original power to keep it. As to these circumstances, the law abides in all its unabated rigour: what then has disannulled its authority, and annihilated its force? The perfect performance of it in the life and death of our sinless surety; or, as the scriptures say, "Christ is the end of the law."* But probably it will be thought Mr. T. and the joint authors of the circular letter, alluded to the original constitution of things, when they allow, "that our obligation to the moral law, supposes a capacity in man to be governed by a law." It is evident this cannot be their meaning; for they say, "positively, 'man has' (not he once had) 'this capacity:'" where they declare, man has now this capacity of being governed by the moral law. But certainly, to say he has a capacity of being governed by a law, gives a new turn to the thought, but a very unnatural one to the argument. For though it may be concluded, that a man may have a capacity, power, or ability to be governed by one law, yet this does not presume he may necessarily be governed by another; the authoritative requisites of which, exceeding his natural faculties: as a man may possess the power of walking, which

* Rom. x. 46.

does not suppose him to be endowed with the capacity of flying.

Neither is the attempt a just one, because not grammatical, which Mr. T. makes* to countenance the inference, that man has a capacity of being governed by the moral law, by converting the article *a*, into the indefinite noun *any*, when he observes, "our letter says, "by *a* law indefinitely, that is, *any* law; then "by the moral law, which is the best, being "perfect." Here he considers the article *a*, and the noun indefinite *any*, as convertible or synonymous expressions, which they are far from being. The article *a* implies nothing of an indefinite nature, but the reverse. It denotes some certain, specific thing or object; and here being applied to the word, law, must denote some certain particular law; and that is such a law as man can be governed by, and not *any* law indefinitely. It is true, if man has a capacity of being governed by *any* law, he has one of being governed by the moral law; but here he has none: the noun indefinite *any*, includes an unlimited idea; but the article *a*, a confined one. Mr. T. was aware, that the form of expression, as it stood in the baptist circular letter, would not justify the conclusion intended, that man has a capacity of being governed by the moral law, and for which reason, alters the mode of it into a more

apt one, by changing the article *a*, into the indefinite noun *any*, which would countenance, to be sure, the inference designed, that man has a capacity of being governed by the moral law, upon a principle he has a capacity of being governed by *any* law, if the thing was true in itself, that he has such a capacity; but man has no such capacity; and the more perfect the law, the less capable he is of government by it. And as the moral law is the best and most perfect of the kind, the more incapable is man to be governed by it.

XX

SECTION VII.

The nature of the gospel-reward, upon what founded, and the misapplication of some passages of scripture adduced by Mr. T. on that subject in p. 21, and 22, considered.

MR. T. in his remarks,* takes some notice of our future reward, and there insinuates that it is bestowed in consideration of our gospel-works, which is a sentiment no way maintainable by the gospel. This thought, I apprehend, is implied in the following extracts: "Undoubtedly the believer has great encouragement to work, and" "is assured his labour shall not be in vain in

* Page 21, and 22.

" the Lord. Must all works bring the believ-
 " er under the law? are there any gospel-
 " works? who have more encouragement to
 " work from a right motive, according to the
 " divine rule, to a proper end, than believers?
 " does the reward make the whole a covenant of
 " works?" These questions, was not any one
 taught of God to know otherways, would evi-
 dently convey such a thought to any who con-
 ceit themselves believers, that the heavenly re-
 ward is conferred on them in consideration of
 what is called their gospel-works, that they
 are to expect this reward, as the prevailing mo-
 tive of encouragement to work, and that the
 more they do, the more they shall be rewarded.
 Such a connection of works and rewards evi-
 dently carries with it the idea of a salvation by
 works, and favours of rank legality. All works
 of whatever kind, wrought in expectation of
 a reward conferred on a performance of them,
 brings every one that thus performs them, style
 himself by whatever character, under the law
 in its covenant-form. The reward makes the
 whole a covenant of works, when it is viewed
 and expected by way of consideration for work
 done. The change and alteration in the term,
 calling the works gospel-works, make no
 change and alteration in the thing itself. For
 whatever works are wrought in a view of a
 reward for the same, may truly be termed
 law, and not gospel-works. And whatever
 may be pretended. the very idea of gospel-
 works

works is utterly lost in the attempt of seeking a reward for them. For gospel-works are performed from no such principle and to no such end; and to term them gospel-works is a gross deceit: they being legal works craftily couched and included under the name and title of gospel-works, when they no more deserve the name than works of debauchery can be called works of morality. Here is evidently intended, that legal sentiment, for much work, for much wages, that the reward is increased proportionably to the number and quantity, degree and measure of works, which naturally fill the mind of the proud justiciary with self-confidence and of course must distress the conscience of such who see the defect and scantiness of their own performances. But in opposition to this reasoning, it may be said, that the reward is considered as an affair of sovereign grace, obtained by another, even Jesus Christ, and only gratuitously bestowed on them, who are found in works of faith, according to the measure and degree of them. This argument no ways helps the matter of those who may advance it for the end intended, nor in the least confutes the mode of reasoning, as above laid down. For what if the reward be not obtained by our own personal obedience, but by the finished performance of another, yet if we are only interested in it by our works of any kind, works of the gospel, or works of the law, works of the heart, or works of life, works of nature, or

works

God, in consideration of the work of the cross; and are persuaded on divine authority, that neither their good or bad works have any tendency to increase or diminish their reward; it being neither obtainable by the one, or forfeited by the other. They view the reward altogether unconnected through the medium of their own works. The principle and end of suffering and action with them, is working from life, and not for life: that when they work, or suffer, no such idea enters their mind, that the heavenly reward awaits them in consideration of their works or sufferings, knowing that the eternal reward abides them in consequence of the finished work and poignant sufferings of the sin-atoning Son of God. They are not biaſſed by a legal spirit to hope that their works (call them works of grace and faith) give them any encouragement to expect their future reward; for they never connect the hope of that reward with their works, but with the work of him who lived and died to obtain it for them.

Nothing also more discovers Mr. T.'s ignorance of a proper view of the gospel-reward, than the misconception of the passages of scripture referred to by him to support it. The passages are as follow: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.—If any man's work abide, he shall receive a reward.—If any man's work be burnt,

"burnt, he shall suffer loss."* One would believe that the smallest attention to the context would give us an understanding, that the reward here mentioned has not the most distant allusion to our reward in heaven. It is very conceivably clear, that the work and reward here spoken of by the apostle are converts begotten by ministers of the truth. For if they be not understood by those phrases, no consistent sense can be given of the apostle's meaning: and it is owing to such a misapprehension of them that commentators have imposed on us their erroneous interpretation of the verses in question. That the scriptures also support us in such a conception, as above hinted, of the phrases in dispute, is undeniable. The apostle styles the church of Corinth, "his work in the Lord."† The apostle John‡ cautions the church to be on its guard against a set of deceivers gone out into the world; and for this reason the apostle observes, he administers the cautionary hint, "that we (the apostles) lose not those things, which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." Here it is very plain what this apostle means by "receiving a full reward," that it was preserving that complement of disciples to the truth perfect and entire, as it then stood and as begotten by his ministry. Whence it is also ma-

* 1. Cor. iii. 8, 14, 15.—† 1. Cor. ix. 11.
—‡ Epistle ii. 8.

nifest the apostle Paul is of a similar meaning in the passages under our view: and that his whole mind appears briefly to be this: that let any man build on the gospel-foundation, Jesus Christ, whomsoever in the world, however esteemed or however contemptible, his work, his convert, shall be made manifest, whether he be of the truth or not by being tried; if his convert prove faithful, he will be a reward of his ministry; if he prove unfaithful, the minister, let him be who he will, will suffer the loss of such a convert, he will be one less among the seals of his ministry, and his labour towards him will be only labour lost. This is all the loss such a minister will suffer in this case; but notwithstanding the loss of such a pretended profelyte, "he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire:" that he must expect to be tried equally as his work or his disciple; that he must have no cause to hope shunning that trial, by which every man's faith, minister's and people's, must be put to the test. This exposition, it is trusted, clears up the view of the apostle in these texts, and rescues them from the false glosses of Mr. T. and the mistaken idea of our future reward, which he endeavours to support by them.

SECTION

SECTION VIII.

The inconsistency of the conduct of those who hold the law as a rule of government, exposed, in observing the first day of the week as the instituted day of divine worship, contrary to the commandment, which enjoins the seventh, and approved by Mr. T. p. 30.

NOTHING more discovers the gross inconsistency of those who are advocates for the law as a rule of conduct, than the allowed and continued breach of one of its commands, which is the observation of the first day of the week for religious purposes, instead of the seventh, which was the day of divine appointment by the law for that use. Mr. Bradford properly hints at the impropriety, which Mr. T. passes over very slightly, as a matter very unimportant; but I think it deserves some notice, as it serves to expose the duplicity of conduct in those who plead for the law as a rule of directory; and so stupidly incongruous is the conduct of the general professing party of Christians in this kingdom in this respect, that in their common form of prayer, part of which the decalogue compounds, that at the conclusion of the rehearsal of the fourth commandment by the minister, the whole congregation join in one solemn petition, " beseeching the Lord to incline their hearts to,

F 3

" keep

“ keep the seventh day holy,” as he had commanded; while they, in open violation of that command, are observing the first day of the week, for the purpose the seventh was ordained by divine authority, to the total neglect of the seventh for any such end. More solemn mockery could not be introduced in any religious form; and yet it continues on without any interrupted alteration with universal approbation. Here it may be observed, that there is only a change of the day, which is a circumstance very immaterial, while the observation of a day is duly attended to, answering all the ends and purposes for which the seventh day of the week was instituted; and that the substitution of the first day of the week for the seventh, for religious observation, is more agreeable to the new dispensation of the gospel, in commemoration of the resurrection of the glorious author of it. The last clause of the sentence is allowed to be just; but what authority was there for such an innovation in this respect? We have no sanction from God for such a change of the day, in contradistinction from the rest of the decalogue. And it is an allowed maxim, that no authority has any power to repeal or alter any law than the law-givers themselves. But it may be said, as the spirit of the day is preserved, it is not so requisite what day is observed. To this we must beg to enter our protest: for if the divine law is held as a rule,

why

why not this part of it equally as any other, since the day itself, as well as the religious observation of it was of sacred institution? And for any one to take the liberty of introducing any alteration in any part of the law of God, upon a supposed view of rendering the part altered as bearing some allusion to some event in the new testament, may on that footing be justified in altering or changing any other part of the divine law to answer in pretence some imaginary good end. For even fixing the seventh day for religious uses, was as sacred a branch of the law, as much as any other command of it; and that any one should substitute any other day in its room, without a sanction from heaven, is a bold attempt. Though this circumstance may have no immediate ill influence on our conduct, yet it is acting in opposition to God, who had thought fit to institute the seventh day of the week for a holy purpose, in contradistinction from any other day. This is such a mode of conduct, totally irreconcilable on the principle of our opponents, that cannot be maintained with any degree of propriety by them pleading for the law as a rule, to break it, in open violation of its authority, in an instance where they have no grounds for the alteration made by them, and which, since they make the law the line of their conduct, is as forcibly binding on them as any other precept, and from which we are not free, except we hold as believers in Christ, we are free from all obligation

obligation to obedience, from the authoritative command of the law in general. We know of no repeal of this part of the ten commands, as separate from the rest of the decalogue; but as the whole law is abrogated and set aside by the gospel, in every shape of it, this also goes with every other precept of it: or else here is a repeal in one point, and in no other, and that without any allowable authority. If the law is the rule of life and conduct, why shall not this branch make a part of it? why is not the seventh day observed according to the commandment? what authority for the substitution of another day, while the law is held in force, as a rule? The seventh must be the day observed by those that adopt the law for that purpose, or else they are only pleading in words for what they allowably approve to deny in practice. It is beyond dispute, that the seventh day must be the day of holy observation, or the point of the law, as a rule of conduct must be given up, to support only a face of consistency in the appearance of things. And it is recommended to the advocates for the law as a directory of life, since such a liberty is taken to alter the day, to alter the letter of the commandment, and let the injunction run, "remember the first day of the week to keep it holy." Such an alteration would support them a little in a consistent appearance, and not manifest such a glaring instance of impropriety in the assembly of some professing Christians,

tians, praying to God to incline their hearts to keep the seventh day holy, when they are professedly keeping the first, and still uninterruptedly continue keeping it, against any inclination of God upon their hearts to keep the day of his appointment. While the letter of the commandment is opposite to their practice, such incongruity of worship must remain. The Roman Catholics took that liberty with the law, by omitting the second commandment, which prohibits the practice of worshipping God, under any visible representation in defence of a consistency of their conduct; but such an innovation, perhaps, in the letter of the fourth commandment, as proposed, would be hardly admissible, without creating much opposition and clamour; and yet there is as much authority to do it, as there is for a departure from the seventh day to the first for divine worship, according to the principles of all who urge the law as our rule of conduct. Such an absurdity of conduct in any temporal instance, would be laughed out of the world; but it seems not only in this point, but in many more of a religious kind, nothing is too gross to be swallowed down.

SECTION

SECTION IX.

Some positions suggested and advanced in p. 32, as to the enjoyment and personal knowledge of our salvation, exposed as unscriptural and unsound.

AMONG the errors apparent in Mr. T.'s remarks, the following in the four succeeding sentences are notoriously pernicious.

"To come to rest and peace by any evidence, without obedience to the word of God, and sanctification, is fatal presumption. The holy spirit doth never evidence the justification of an unholy, disobedient despiser of the moral law. Persons ought to look into themselves for a new heart, true faith, &c. and be taught to do so. Having these, they unavoidably look unto Christ preached to them, as directed in the gospel: but being destitute of these, they do not look to Christ savingly and evangelically, whatever their delusions may be." Nothing can be more false and unscriptural than the mode here recommended to obtain rest and peace, and ascertain our personal interest in the salvation of the gospel. The evidences proposed by Mr. T. to come at rest and peace are obedience to the word of God, and what he improperly calls sanctification; and he affirms, that our justification is only evidenced by an holy obedience to the moral

ral law. By these evidences, which Mr. T. terms obedience to the word of God and our sanctification, he evidently means an inherent righteousness, an holy obedience to the moral law. That this is Mr. T.'s meaning of obedience to the word of God, and of our sanctification, is clear from his common use of the terms to convey the same sentiment. And he asserts to come at peace and rest and an assurance of our justification with God otherways than through the medium of such evidences, is fatal presumption. A sentiment we oppose as repugnant to the gospel. To substitute any evidences in the room of the divine evidence of the word of God, as the grounds or the medium of attaining peace and rest in our consciences, or of the personal knowledge of our acceptance with God, is precarious, groundless and unscriptural. Such an attempt tries to set aside the evidence of the spirit of God, which is the written testimony, destroys the very nature of the gospel, which proclaims salvation to guilty sinners, and ultimately terminates in a salvation by works. To come to the enjoyment of rest and peace and the personal assurance of salvation by any evidences whatever than that, from which those blessings ought to be derived, is drawing them from a false and delusive source, and therefore must be a false peace and deceitful rest. Though it may be pretendedly allowed, that the finished work of the cross be the only true and real fountain of hope and joy

joy, of justification and life; yet if any other evidences of whatever kind are previously to be viewed in the heart or life of any person before he can assure himself of a certainty of his own salvation, the inference is conclusive and just, that what evidences his salvation to him, is the real source from whence his peace and rest and joy issue. Though the righteousness of Christ is seemingly granted to be the cause of a sinner's justification, and by which he is sanctified; yet if any preliminary, intervening righteousness of our own, any supposed inward operations or workings of the spirit, any pleasing symptoms or tokens about our own heart are to be sought for in order to ascertain our interest in that perfect righteousness of God's eternal Son, it comes to the same end and is altogether tantamount, as if we were required to work out a righteousness of our own, as the ground-work of our dependence upon God. Since it is pleaded a righteousness must be wrought in us and by us for the knowledge or enjoyment of our Redeemer's righteousness, what is this but working for his work? Here the soul is set upon all that self-righteous labour and exercise, as if it was to work out a righteousness of its own for its personal acceptance with the Deity, to certify the understanding or the conscience of a participation of the spotless righteousness of the Lord Jesus. For whatever evidences to us, peace, hope and joy, that mark or token be it what it will, is in reality

ity and in fact, the source or spring, from whence these blessings are derivable. If the righteousness of Christ cannot be viewed as our particular enjoyment till we can view a kind of work or righteousness in ourselves, it is plain and undeniable, that our peace and joy of conscience do not flow through the immediate channel of the righteousness of Christ, but through the intercepted medium of our own inherent or external habit of righteousness. Hence if our righteousness or obedience evidences to us and proves our claim to, or our enjoyment of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our personal obedience or righteousness is manifestly that which affords us joy and comfort in his. So that we can experience none in his, till we see our own, which in truth is that which gives us hope and peace, and not his. For as before asserted on a gospel-principle, whatever are the evidences of peace and rest, they are, in the course of things, the real fountain whence they spring.

Such a scheme fairly overturns the gospel-plan of salvation to sinners. In the view of the gospel, as exhibited by the devout part of the world, it appears solely intended and calculated, not for sinners, but self-righteous saints, who, if things are properly attended to, have no need of it; for if they can become possessed of a certain habit of gracious qualities, heavenly dispositions, holy tempers, a sanctified heart, an inherent work of righteousness,

which are to serve in proving their justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, they have truly a sufficient righteousness, fitting and qualifying them for the divine esteem, without that righteousness of our Lord: if it will answer one purpose, it is as well suited for the other. On this self-created holy plan of salvation, what becomes of sinners destitute of all such fancied excellencies and attainments? What becomes of the gospel of Jesus Christ to such? If any particular distinguished marks and evidences are to be discernible in us prior to the personal knowledge of our salvation, it is a real fact, that salvation does not reach us in the capacity of sinners, or we meet it in that character, but as some holy, heavenly-minded persons, as obedient observers of the moral law. This is effectually setting aside the gospel-salvation to a guilty world, and establishing it in preference to sinners, as the exclusive property of the better disposed class of mankind, in opposition to the evident declaration of our Lord, who asserted, " he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,"* What a contrast to this declaration of our Lord, are the following propositions of Mr. T? " Persons ought to look into themselves for a new heart, true faith, &c. and be taught to do so. Having these, they unavoidably look to Christ, preached unto them as directed in

* Math. ix. 13.

“ the gospel; but being destitute of these,
“ they do not look to Christ savingly and
“ evangelically, whatever their delusions may
“ be.” Here are roundly asserted, and warmly
recommended, some of the most extraordinary
pieces of instruction, which are radically
wrong, and occasion us to stumble at the
threshold of our salvation. One cannot also
conceive a greater heap of crudities jum-
bled together; that persons are to be taught
previously to look for a new heart, true faith,
&c. to consider Christ preached to them; that
possessed of these requisite qualifications, they
are to view him as directed in the gospel to
them. The gospel contains no such directory,
but maintains it “ a faithful saying, and
“ worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus
“ came into the world to save sinners,” where
he is evidently set forth as the unqualified hope
of the guilty, destitute of all those prerequisites
supposed and asserted by Mr. T. as necessary
to be sought for in the soul, to look at Christ.
Mr. T. thought proper to instance only two
of those peculiar qualities requisite to be ob-
tained to look at Christ savingly and evangeli-
cally, which are, a new heart, and true faith.
How many more gracious signs, and which
they be, that we must be endued with to
look at Christ, which he includes in his *et*
cætera, we are at a loss to know, since they
are not mentioned. It would have been only
proper to signify them, since some distressed,

unenlightened minds may be anxiously desirous of knowing by what other marks they be distinguished, to look savingly and evangelically at Christ; and while they are kept in ignorance of them, will be always labouring under a kind of suspicious distrust and fear whether they are blessed with every requisite evidence to be privileged in looking at him for salvation. For ought we know Mr. T. has such a long string of them in his mind, that it was too tedious to mention. However long as the catalogue may be, there was a real necessity of mentioning them, for the satisfaction of those whom he wished it should concern, as such persons must truly be ever under a deep concern for their salvation, who are to ascertain it by certain discriminating tokens, which are totally kept out of their sight. The only two instanced by Mr. T. are, "a new heart and true faith." Two more absurd ones he could not have hit upon. If a man is possessed of a new heart to trust in Jesus Christ, he does not trust in him characterized as a sinner, but as one imagining himself qualified for that end. If he has a new heart, previous to his knowledge of trusting Christ, he has that property which fits him for the divine regard, that his trust in Christ is an act of superfluity. The other prerequisite insisted on to look to Christ, which is a true faith, is, if possible, more absurd. If true faith is attained before we look to Christ, we consequently are true believers

believers previous to believing in him. A greater absurdity in divine things could not be broached. A true faith is not distinguishable by some peculiar manner in believing, how our mind and affections may be impressed in coming to the knowledge of a certain truth, but in believing that which is true ; and if the truth can be believed before we look at Christ, we have true faith previous to believing in him. Whereas the scriptures style him eminently to be " the truth ; " wherefore to believe in him is to believe the truth. And hence it may be enquired, what true faith a man can have evidencing him to believe or look at Christ, when his believing in him is his true faith, or in other words, when all true faith centers in him, the object of the truth to be believed. Such persons so characterized by Mr. T. are said by him unavoidably to look unto Christ preached to them, as directed in the gospel. A falser assertion could not be spoken by Mr. T. and a falser conclusion cannot be made by the persons themselves that adopt it for true, than that he should say, or that they should infer, that the gospel bears a particular aspect to them in distinction from the rest of mankind, because they are endued with such happy tokens of discrimination. The gospel wears no such peculiar direction, as he insinuates, to persons so circumstanced. It views all upon one common level, without any difference, as sinners ;

“ for there are none righteous, no not one,”* is the infallible humiliating voice of revelation. That any gracious souls inheriting those differencing marks and evidences, should “ *unavoidably* look to Christ,” implies they cannot help doing otherwise; that the fancied possession of that distinguished difference, mechanically moves them, as it were, to look to Jesus Christ, and they may venture, as well disposed people, to do so without fear of incurring the danger of fatal presumption, or officious intermeddling. It is not denied, but such high flown conceits may, as satan’s delusion, influence them to think so of themselves; but that they are so directed in the gospel, has been sufficiently proved to the contrary. And whatever such may pretend of believing in, and looking to Jesus Christ, they manifestly do not trust in his finished redemption, as sinners, and not trusting in it in that self-mortifying character, their trust in truth is not simply in that, but in some connected form with their own righteousness, and so their dependence is a delusive one, not viewing it as sinners, in conjunction with the rest of their fellow-creatures, on the foundation which God hath laid in Zion. This is that which distinguishes the faith of God’s elect, from the false hope of the religious world; for there is not a professing party of Christians, but in some shape or form,

* Rom. iii. 10.

introduce Christ as the ground of hope; since they bear his name, it is requisite he should hold some place in their religious system: some maintain that he is their Saviour conditionally, that is, when they have performed the conditions on their part, they may with safety trust their eternal concerns in his hands; others who scout that term, *conditionally*, conclude they may savingly view him their dependence, when they can behold some pleasing signs or objects in themselves, or that some previous work, in a tedious painful process of conviction of sin, hath passed upon their heart, which is falsely called and imagined to be a work of grace.

Whatever seeming difference may appear in these two systems of men, for they are not of God, they both meet in one common center respecting our dependence on our Maker, each holding something to trust Jesus Christ, and so deny the gospel-method of looking to him as sinners, not trusting and depending on the evidence of God, without the intervention of their own righteousness, which you may call conditions or evidences, it being immaterial, as it is substituted in such a form, to cut off a sinner, as such, in his sins, to trust the Almighty Saviour of such.

Here perhaps it may be enquired, by what evidence is a believer to know that he is a believer, or that Jesus Christ is his real hope? What evidence? why the evidence by which he,

he, as a sinner, was called to believe in him, which is the faithful testimony of God, which is an evidence more infallibly certain, than those mentioned by Mr. T. for that purpose. When that testimony is believed, it becomes an evidence in the mind or conscience of him who believes it, as it did, and does still remain so on divine record. For a believer, I mean one that can be properly called so from what he believes, wants and seeks for no additional certifying tokens of his faith, than the evidence on which he believes any divine truth. When his mind is convinced with the certainty of the evidence of the truth he is called to believe, he is perfectly satisfied in the matter, and rests content. That a man, for instance, has nothing more to do in knowing his hope real for futurity, than enquiring whether his hope, as it subsists in his own mind and view, be such as God requires it to be according to his revealed word: if it corresponds thereto, he wants and waits for no other evidence to assure him of the reality of his hope; that on which he builds it is sufficient for him, and he experiences the effects, that "there is all joy and peace in believing."

It may be further said, that there is no testimony or evidence in the word of God, that any man on that authority can believe, that Christ died for him; and that no falsehood can be converted into a truth by believing it. The last clause is readily allowed to be a truth,

as being on first sight a self-evident axiom. Believing a lie, cannot constitute it a truth. Such is not faith, but fancy; or rather, a belief of a falsehood. But we cannot leave the former part of the objection pass in the same manner, not to be denied, without conniving at the rejection of a truth of God. For nothing is more certain, than that such a testimony exists in the divine word, that any man on that authority alone, may believe that Christ died for him: and if such a testimony or report may be made to appear in the sacred records of truth, it can be no falsehood, which is believed, it is not converted into a truth by believing it, but it was a truth in the word of God previous to believing it, and only becomes a truth likewise in the mind of him who believes it by believing it: and the same truth remains such in the scriptures of God, whether believed or not, though it is no truth in any one's mind or conscience but he that believes it; for it must exist there as a truth before it can be believed by any one as such. Now, that such a testimony stands upon record in the gospel, that Christ came to save any man, is what is incumbent upon us to prove. Let the following testimony suffice to rest the authority of the sentiment under consideration on. The apostle Paul asserts and prefaces the declaration with a preliminary sanction of its truth, "that it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ
 " Jesus

"Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" On the authority of this general declaration, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," any individual sinner has the divine warrant for his security, without fear of incurring the danger of fatal presumption, to believe that Christ came to save him a sinner. No man does believe the above cited declaration of scripture, as it there stands, without believing he came to save him. For it is a first-rate absurdity to suppose, that in generals any of the species is excluded. For which reason, if any one believes that general declaration, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," he must, on the same unerring evidence, believe he came to save him. We would have it observed, that the object of faith is not made that any particular man may be called upon to believe that Christ died or came to save him in particular; to assert this position would be wrong and unwarrantable, because there is no such testimony addressed to him in particular to be believed: and it moreover implies, that some are excluded, when he is only particularly addressed. But this we maintain, that every one may be called to believe in Christ, for his own personal salvation, on the grounds of the general declaration, of salvation for sinners; and every one believes his own particular salvation,

* 1 Tim. i. 15.

by

by believing that general declaration. It is not said, that he must believe that general declaration of the apostle, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," previous to believing his own particular salvation; that he must first believe in general of others, before he believes in particular of himself. But we would be understood, that every one who believes the declaration of the apostle, which is of universal aspect, that our Lord came to save sinners, must, on the same precise evidence, which is the direct testimony of God, believe he came to save him among them. For if he doubts or disbelieves his own personal salvation there alluded to, and the declaration not pointing to him, which bears a direction to sinners of every kind, without one discriminating mark of difference, whatever he may affirm, that he has no doubt respecting the declaration in its general view, that Christ came to save sinners, while he has any doubts respecting it in a personal application, that he came to save him, his words are but unmeaning expressions. For on the same grounds he believes the salvation of sinners, on the same warrant he would believe his own, if he did believe that of sinners: the idea cannot be separated; where terms are general, particulars are included: on which principle, nothing is clearer than that he who believes the apostle's declaration, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," must inevitably include his own personal

sonal salvation, that he came to save him, be-
 cause he came to save sinners, and he being
 one. So when any one believes that testi-
 mony, " that Christ came to save sinners," he
 must believe he came to save him, he being
 of that class and description he came to save.
 If an invitation to some entertainment was to
 run in general terms, confining the address to
 the inhabitants of such a place, would not all
 the inhabitants rightly consider themselves in
 the bounds of the invitation? Would not each
 individual see himself included and meant in
 the general style of the invitation? And give
 me leave to add, would not any one clearly
 perceive, such a one did not credit the gene-
 ral purport of the invitation, if he, as an in-
 habitant of the place to which the invitation
 was made, began to raise scruples respecting
 himself? A more familiar or apposite illu-
 stration cannot be exhibited, of the general free-
 ness of the gospel-invitation to sinners. And
 it is on the same direct testimony of God in his
 word, which conveys the free gift of Christ to
 sinners, that every one knows, who believes
 aright, his own personal acceptance with God,
 waiting for no other evidence to assure him
 of the same, than that which assures him of
 it, which is the infallible evidence of the divine
 word, which testifies, " that Christ Jesus came
 " into the world to save sinners," which be-
 comes an evidence in his mind, that cannot
 be shaken, by believing it; for in believing he
 came

came to save sinners, he believes he came to save him, as being a sinner, as any one would visibly see himself invited to an entertainment, which was of a general view. And as the gospel bears this general aspect to sinners, all being such, there is no necessity of particularizing any one by any other distinguished character, than there would be in a general invitation to an entertainment where all are included, to mention any one personally or by name. A particular address in the one case, as in the other, would be superfluous. Nay, an address made to any one individual in particular, on either of the occasions, would entirely destroy the general tenor of the call or invitation, and would naturally suggest a kind of suspicious reasoning in the mind of some who were only confined in the bounds of the general address, "that if
 " such an one was particularly called and invi-
 " ted, why might not I have been? why was
 " not that honor and respect shewed me? such
 " an exception appears like a secret slight and
 " disregard of me, and since such an one received
 " a particular address, who no better deserved
 " it than myself, being altogether in similar cir-
 " cumstances; the general invitation looks much
 " like unmeaning parade." Therefore the gos-
 pel-call to sinners being of that free, unlimited designation, bars every murmuring complaint of that sort. If an exceptive case is made, it is by some invented, partial construction upon the declaration. The word of God makes none.

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Though some may observe, that they be sinners of some peculiar qualified complexion that are intended in the declaration, such as persons duly convinced of and mortifying sin, who have perfect hatred and heart-felt detestation of it, who are brought to a sincere repentance and renunciation of it, who view it in its real, undisguised, odious colours, and who are wrought upon to submit to the gospel-salvation, not so much from a dread of the punishment of sin, as to be purified from sin within. Others also are excluding themselves from the extensive view of the benefit of the declaration by objecting that it bears no direction to them, by reason they are sinners of an enormous degree and of long standing, are grown old in sin, have committed sins of the worst kind. The divine declaration opposes each of these views of it. It neither includes in it any qualified sinners, or excludes by it any unqualified ones, but comprises the general class of sinners, mankind indefinitely, as such. The word of heaven draws no line of distinction between one sinner and another, but lays it down as a faithful truth and worthy of all men to be received, "that Christ Jesus came to save sinners," one equally as another, without distinction, without discrimination. Therefore for any to insist they be some duly qualified sinners, are here intended as the favourite objects of salvation, is contracting, by a very unnatural restraint, the general idea of the declaration or testimony of God, and is as inconclusive reasoning from
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it, as that any, on the other hand, should conclude, they are truly unqualified, and come not within the declaration, because they are sinners of such an uncommon dye and degree, either by the number, atrociousness, or long continuance of their sins. To embarrass this or any of the gospel-testimonies of this nature with some confined interpretation, is clogging the gospel-freedom to salvation, as sinners, and restraining it within the narrow compass of some who conceit themselves better than others; which is only a conceit founded in themselves. We hence trust what has been said has sufficiently exposed the errors taken under consideration in the present section, as set forth by Mr. T. which were "that persons must be taught
 "to look for a new heart, true faith to look to
 "Christ as preached to them, as directed in
 "the gospel; that to come to peace and rest
 "by any evidence, without inherent holiness
 "or obedience to the moral law, is fatal presumption:" that on the contrary, it hath been made to appear, in opposition to these sentiments, that God doth evidence the justification of a man, as a sinner, that peace, and rest, and hope of salvation reign in the conscience of such in believing the divine testimony, and that no one need look for any inherent qualities to view Christ preached to him in the gospel, or that it is directed to such possessing such marks of discrimination.

SECTION X.

The assertion, " that the law, considered as a rule of conduct, has no curses," proved to be ill founded, and a gross inconsistency.

THAT the law, considered as a rule of conduct, has no curses, is an unsupported and groundless assertion, will be made evident, from the following considerations. When the divine Law-giver promulgated and founded his law, he annexed the sanctions of reward and punishment thereto, which is the unvaried mode in the formation and establishment of all law-systems—a reward attending obedience, and punishment the consequence of an opposite conduct. So was the divine law founded. This perhaps may be agreed to, and readily granted; but an objection will probably be made, by viewing the law in another appearance. In its covenant-form, it may be allowed to retain its sanctions sacred and inviolable, but as a rule of life, it has no penalties or rewards annexed to it. This distinction of the law of God in two different forms, has been sufficiently exposed and confuted in the first section. And we see here the wretched shift the ingenious schemes of men are reduced to in splitting a difference in the formulary mode of the sacred law of heaven, to divest it of its sanctions. If any system terminates in rank antinomianism, (as it is understood) it is this,
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which opens a wide door to all those ill consequences so much dreaded and apprehended by the view in which we hold the divine law, as totally abrogated by the gospel, as to every believer in Jesus Christ. Here is taking such a liberty with the law, which the almighty Author and Founder of it, could not, consistent with his divine perfections, have done, which is, to separate one of its sanctions from it; and in this human-invented form of the law, as a rule of conduct, separate from its covenant-form, a separation of its other sanction is implied; and so the holy law of God is stripped of its divine appendages, when it is asserted, that the law, merely considered as a rule of conduct, has neither rewards or curses. Who dares to separate the inviolable sanctions from the divine law, which all attempt to do who assert, it has no penal authority annexed to it in some particular form of it? And who can presume to convert it into any such form, where no penalty is connected with it? Here is modelling the divine law after a witness indeed! Was any one to affix such an idea to any human law, and act accordingly, in a violation of its authority, would soon be made to feel whether there was no penal sanction attended the transgression of any of those laws, while he was a subject of that authority? Will God be more lenient than man, from a greater inattention to the honor and sacredness of his law? Besides, what kind of a law is that which is unenforced
by

by any sanctions? It is a mere play-thing, which may be observed or broke at pleasure, and its authority treated with lawless contempt. For since it has no penalty annexed to it, there is nothing to fear or to dread from the violations of its commands: for the sentiment is, if the law is broken, it has no curse to inflict, though under obligation to observe it. But little regard will be paid, where this sentiment is received, to the preceptive authority of the law, while it is divested of its penal sanction, and since our corrupt nature runs counter to the holy precepts of that divine standard. It is also immaterial, as it is insufficient to answer the ends of any legal government, how positive and strict any law may be, which is guarded by no penalty to inflict on the transgressor. The result must be anarchy and confusion. And they are such sentiments as these of the divine law, that naturally lead to what is commonly understood by antinomianism, which is, libertinism of conduct and licentiousness of manners. For what has a more natural tendency to that end, than to allow the preceptive authority of the law, to make it the rule of conduct, and wherever there be a failure in any one or more instances, there is no curse to be inflicted? This is pretty doctrine, and what could not be expected from any who pretend to set up themselves as the guardians of the interests of holiness. And whatever such may imagine, while they attempt to regulate their conduct by that
divine

divine code, and fail in a perfect compliance with its requirements, will certainly find themselves under the curse, that the law has its curse in as equal and undiminished power, as its obligation. "Whatsoever the law says, it says to them that are under the law."* And it says to them that are under it, "curled is he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them."† They that put themselves under the authority of the law to obey its precepts, must obey the whole of them, or they inevitably fall under its malediction. They cannot separate the curse from the law. If the law is admitted to influence the conduct, and the obedience be not answerable thereto, the damnatory power thereof will not fail to execute its sentence with force and rigour. To say that Christ has redeemed them from the curse of the law, and that so it happens, "the law has no curses," they being removed by his substitution, is saying nothing, while the mandatory obligation of the law, is allowed on the life and conduct. For while the obligation of the law is admitted in force to command, the counterpart, the curse of the law must be admitted in force to condemn. From both which authorities of the law our Lord hath delivered us, as we maintain, and we hope, with satisfaction, and who hath furnished us in his word with new motives and other authorities

* Rom. iii. 19.—† Gal. iii. 10.

than the law to influence our conduct on earth, prescribing also rules therein for the same. And since he and his apostles hath done this, what necessity of flying and having recourse to the law to bind our conduct and deportment; a law which we have not and cannot keep, which neither we or our fathers were ever able to bear. ?

Every thing of a personal nature was studiously avoided in the preceding reflections, and the truth of God the only object in view to be defended, which in his hands shall not fail to prevail and prosper among his people.



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